

JAPANESE GIRLS

MARGARITA J. LAKE



THE first impression made upon these girls as they touch the shores of this strange land, means everything to them. Every steamer brings one or more who have never been outside their own little village or province. Some have never been away from their own humble homes, and many of them have never heard the name of Jesus. Some are coming to relatives in this land, possibly to brothers who have been here long enough to learn a little English and to earn money enough to send for them. Others come to be married, having known the husband-to-be, in Japan. And still others come to marry men whom they never saw nor even heard of until within a short time of sailing. I am told by these girls that it is very hard for a girl or woman to earn anything in Japan, especially in the country places, where thirty-five cents a week is good wages in some parts of the country, and in other parts they even feel themselves fortunate to earn their board. It is very difficult for a single woman or girl to obtain a passport from the Japanese government to this country. For this reason many have entered by the way of Honolulu. I am always sorry for the little women who come. They remind me of wild flowers that

bloom in the spring to be soon trodden down. Oh, the temptations that most of them must meet, and that, too, without knowing anything about the help of the loving Saviour and Friend of women.

We have here a little woman who came with her husband to this country, and both were denied a landing on account of having the dreaded disease of the eyes. They had very little money left, as their trip had cost far more than they expected, and to return to Japan without money and with no place to go to seemed a great hardship. One of our Japanese merchants heard their story and offered to be responsible for the wife if she might be allowed to land and come to the Home, as her eyes were not affected, but it was decided that her husband must return to Japan. She had only the clothing she wore when she left Japan, and a suit case with a silk handkerchief in it. In some way or other all her clothing had been left on the wharf in Japan. This same merchant gave me forty dollars with which to purchase clothing for her. She will remain in the Home until she can speak English and learn something of cooking, sewing and housework. She has never heard the sweet story of the gospel. Pray for her, dear friends, that she may hear and believe, and for us who have the privilege of telling the story.

Not long ago I brought two pretty young women from the steamer who had come all the way from Japan to be married. Both bridegrooms seemed to be fine young men, and both are doing well in business. One is a shoemaker, the other a photographer, in Oakland. Both girls wore pretty Japanese clothes. I met them at the steamer early in the morning and brought them to the Home, where one of them met her promised husband for the first time.

After lunch the brides and grooms, with my interpreter and myself, went in search of a license clerk, and then of the preacher. This took the entire afternoon, but all seemed very grateful for what we had done for them.

We have two little children in our Home who came from Honolulu. Their father had been taken ill on the way over, and upon the arrival of the boat he was taken to the hospital and the children to our Home. Their mother is working.

Aside from those whom we bring to the Home we try to speak with all the women and give them our card, warning them of the dangers of the city, and assuring them that they may always come to us when in need of help or counsel. Several have responded to this invitation.

The need for this work is increasing all the time. So many of the middle and lower classes are coming that the Japanese Home is needed more than ever. The Buddhists have a strong foothold here and in southern California, and we need to be diligent in teaching these strangers from a strange land the first principles of the doctrine of Christ.



WOMAN'S HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
150 Fifth Avenue, New York City

